

Newsletter | August 8, 2023



Trivia question

What was Broadcast House? Where was it?

For the answer, see the end of this newsletter.



Feds award \$1M for rehab of Colt estate outbuildings

The building where gun maker Sam Colt kept his horse-drawn carriages, along with a cottage where his gardener lived, will undergo repair and renovations, thanks to a \$1 million grant from the National Park Service. The buildings, both built around 1860 and vacant for years, stand in what is now Colt Park, behind the former Colt mansion on Wethersfield Avenue. The NPS is [in the process of creating](#) the Coltsville National Historical Park, which will include the Colt factory complex, workers' housing, Colt Park, and the Church of the Good Shepherd.

Sources:

- ["\\$1 million earmarked for 'endangered' historic buildings in Hartford's Colt Park,"](#) Hartford Courant, August 4, 2023
- ["Hartford's Colt Park isn't officially a national historic park yet — but it's close,"](#) CT Insider, August 5, 2023
- [National Park Service background](#) on the carriage house and gardener's

Last obstacle to chapel's demolition gone

The National Park Service has effectively cleared the way for demolition of the Deborah Chapel, a 137-year-old funeral chapel at Hartford's Beth Israel Cemetery, at the corner of Ward and Affleck streets. Leaders of Congregation Beth Israel say the long-vacant chapel has deteriorated into a target for vandals, which in turn has encouraged vandalism through the rest of the cemetery. The state attorney general had joined preservationists in opposing it.

Sources:

- ["Hartford building recognized nationally as historic could be days from demolition,"](#) Hartford Courant, July 21, 2023
- [Hartford Preservation Alliance statement](#)
- ["When what you're nostalgic for is still right here,"](#) CT News Junkie opinion article by Kerri Ana Provost, July 31, 2023.

1920s apartment building saved from demolition

Hartford HealthCare, the corporation that operates Hartford Hospital, has scotched its plans to demolish a historic but long-vacant apartment buildings at the corner of Washington and Jefferson streets. As noted in the [July 1 newsletter](#), the plans elicited loud objections from preservationists and neighborhood leaders. Now Hartford HealthCare officials say they plan to put \$1 million into transforming the 1920s-era building into medical facilities.

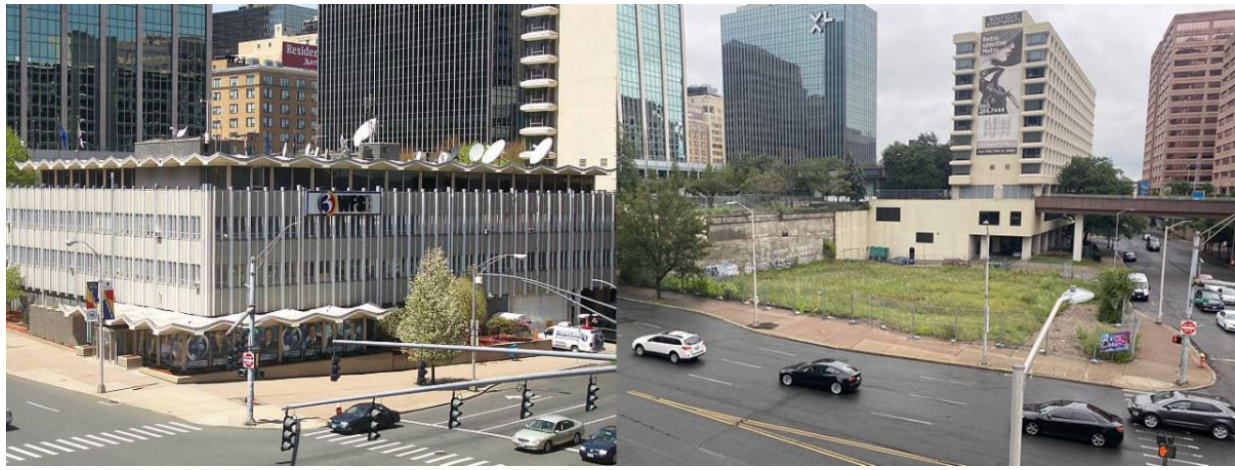
Sources:

- ["Hartford HealthCare to revamp historic Frog Hollow buildings,"](#) CT Insider, July 20, 2023
- ["Under pressure, Hartford Hospital backs off plan to demolish historic CT building,"](#) Hartford Courant, July 20, 2023
- [Materials](#) from the July 19 meeting of the Hartford Historic Preservation Commission

Bronin reflects on eight years as mayor

Departing Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin sat down with Hearst Connecticut reporter Emily DiSalvo to [look back on his eight years in office](#), which included the challenges of near-bankruptcy and COVID-19.

Trivia question answer



[Thanks to Dennis House](#) for permission to use the photo of Broadcast House at left. At right, the site today.

Broadcast House served as the home of Hartford's CBS TV affiliate, Channel 3, from 1961 to 2007, when the station moved to Rocky Hill. Located at the corner of State Street and Columbus Boulevard, it was the first component of Constitution Plaza. Initially, the building was also home for radio stations WTIC-AM and -FM. (At the time, the Travelers owned the radio stations as well as the TV station, also called WTIC.)

The city took tremendous pride in the new facility: Here was a state-of-the-art TV studio, housed in cutting-edge architecture, serving as the cornerstone of what everyone expected to become a national model for urban redevelopment. An evening of dedication ceremonies included remarks from Governor John N. Dempsey, the unveiling of a statue for the occasion, and the performance of a specially commissioned symphony.

The Middletown company that owns the property demolished Broadcast House in 2009 to make way for a planned office tower. The plans fell through, however, leaving a vacant lot at a focal point of downtown. The property was recently put back on the market, touted as a potential site for housing or mixed-use construction.

Sources:

- [December 1961 issue of "Advance,"](#) the WTIC-TV internal newsletter. Posted by [WTICalumni.com](#), this is an absolutely fascinating read. See the last page for an article and photograph concerning the familiar "Broadcaster" statue.
- "Structures and Styles: Guided Tours of Hartford Architecture," by Gregory E. Andrews and David F. Ransom, published in 1988 by the Connecticut Historical Society and the Connecticut Architecture Foundation.
- "Broadcast House draws tributes at dedication," Hartford Courant, November 28, 1961
- ["Former home of WFSB Channel 3 for sale in downtown Hartford,"](#) CT Insider, July 26, 2023

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